

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for participating in the telephone interview conducted on March 12, 2004 with Applicant's representative. In the interview, it was agreed that if the claims were amended as shown herein, they would be allowable over all of the prior art references of record.

Status of the Application

Claims 2-28, 30-32 and 35-38 are all the claims pending in the Application, as claims 33 and 34 are hereby cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 2-28 and 30-38 have been rejected. Independent claims 3, 31, 37 and 38 of this Application are amended according to the agreement reached at the interview noted above. Dependent claims 24, 35 and 36 are amended in a clarifying, non-limiting manner.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 33 and 34 under both the first and second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112. However, as claims 33 and 34 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, these rejections are now moot.

Additionally, the Examiner has rejected claims 37 and 38 as allegedly being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The informalities noted by the Examiner have been corrected. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejections

The Examiner has rejected each of the pending claims 2-28, 30-32 and 35-38 as being anticipated by, or obvious over, various cited references (or combinations thereof) including *EP*

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No.: 09/674,039

Attorney Docket # Q59956

0867310 A2, JP 11-263103, US 6,138,728, JP 05-319025, US 3,682,220, JP 09-002024 and JP 06-270609.

However, each of these rejections are now believed to be moot in view of the claim amendments herein.

Thus, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of these rejections.


Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-28, 30-32 and 35-38 are allowable. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the application now is in condition for allowance with all of the claims 2-28, 30-32 and 35-38.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees which may be required to maintain the pendency of this application, except for the Issue Fee, to our Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,



Timothy P. Cremen
Registration No. 50,855

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-3213
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: April 19, 2004